Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 2nd October 2024 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Lisa Hayes, Fred Wilson, Paul Mackin and Ken Pollard.

Three members of the public.

Town Clerk: C Quinlan (Admin Assistant).

1. **Apologies:** apologies received from Cllrs Steve Nash and Den Fensome.

2. **Declarations of interest:** none declared.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 4th September 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:** three members of the public made representation and two members of the public gave a presentation to the Committee regarding planning application CB/24/02626/FULL.

5. **Delegated Powers**
   CB/TCA/24/00383
   Land To The Rear Of Church of Saint Michaels and All Angels, High Street, Shefford Works to Trees within the Conservation Area: Up to a 3m crown raise and siding back on Ash Tree and Yew Tree)

   As no response was received from the Planning and Highways Committee, no resolution was made and no comments were submitted.

6. **Plans for Consideration**
   CB/24/02626/FULL
   62 Ampthill Road, Shefford, SG17 5BB
   Proposal: Erection of a 1.5 storey, 1 one-bedroom dwelling with parking and garden. Demolition of existing garage.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to object to this application on the following grounds:
   - ***The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Policies Map (published: July 2021) shows that this proposed build is partially outside the Shefford settlement envelope. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with Policy SP7 Windfall Development and Settlement Envelopes of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.***
   - ***There is an inadequate separation distance between the proposed dwelling and the adjacent building (No. 62). The distance from No. 62's***

first floor rear-facing window to the rear garden boundary fence is 10.2m. The measurement from the current garage building on the development site (due to be demolished) to the boundary fence is 9.59m metres. Together this distance totals 19.79m; the recommended distance to maintain privacy and outlook in residential settings is a minimum of 22m. The cramped proximity, combined with the substantial footprint of the proposed dwelling, will result in a loss of outlook and a sense of overbearing for both properties. Therefore, the proposed development plans submitted demonstrate inadequate space between the proposed building and existing property and will significantly impact the amenity of both existing and future occupants, contrary to Policies HQ1: High Quality Development & HQ8 Backland Development of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and Sections 6.0 & 11.0 of the Central Bedfordshire Council Design Guideline 2023.

- ***Furthermore, the location of the driveway and parking area close to the boundary of No. 62 raises concerns about noise and disturbance. The close proximity of car movements, parking activities, and bin storage to the boundary will introduce frequent noise disturbances, particularly during early mornings and evenings. This issue is compounded by the narrowness of the site, which will intensify the impact on the existing residents of No. 62.***
- ***The design of the proposed development would cause harm to the character of the surrounding area, as the neighbouring buildings form a well-established silhouette visible from Ampthill Road and a significant design aspect of the road. The proposed infill dwelling is misaligned with the existing projection and would result in a loss of openness of the buildings. This would have a negative impact on the nature of the established dwellings and would constitute overdevelopment of the site, leading to erosion of the distinctive character and existing layout of the close. Because of this, the proposed development is contrary to Paragraph 135 of the NPPF and Policy HQ1: High Quality Development & Policy HQ8: Back-land Development of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.***
- ***The site is situated on permeable strata (Woburn Sands Formation - Sandstone and River Terrace Deposits), which makes it highly susceptible to groundwater flooding. This risk to the property is significant and could be exacerbated during high rainfall events, especially in conjunction with fluvial flooding from the nearby River Flit (approximately 95m from the site). Although the Environment Agency's Historic Flood Map indicates the site has not flooded previously, this is out of date and incorrect, as proven by recent flooding of the site and surrounding area and buildings. The Hertfordshire County Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2022) indicates that the site location is highly susceptible to groundwater flooding, suggesting a high-water table. A sequential test has not been submitted within the***

application and therefore the application does not comply with Paragraph 167 of the NPPF.

- ***The Flood Risk Assessment also takes into account the potential increase in rainfall intensity due to climate change, suggesting a 40% allowance for future storm events. However, the increased risk from both fluvial and surface water flooding under future climate conditions adds uncertainty to the long-term safety of the development. The site falls within a flood warning area, and a Flood Warning & Evacuation Plan is recommended. However, such a plan would rely on the registration of future occupants to a flood warning system, which may not always be guaranteed, adding a layer of risk in case of extreme events.***
- ***Additionally, surface water runoff is also a potential issue due to the site's topography. Some of the areas of the site, especially the southeastern corner, have been identified as low to medium risk of surface water flooding. The proposed drainage strategy relies on infiltration, but further testing would be required to prove its feasibility and capability for the site. The submitted drainage strategy includes the use of permeable paving, infiltration trenches, and bioretention areas to manage surface water runoff. However, space for these features in such a small garden is not sufficient, and these systems are still subject to further testing (BRE 365 soakaway) to ensure they can effectively handle the runoff. With limited space and implementation, there is a risk that the proposed systems may not perform as expected. The introduction of an additional dwelling with associated impermeable surfaces (such as the roof, driveway, and paved areas) will contribute to the ground being unable to absorb surface water effectively, which will exacerbate the water pooling and localised flooding by increasing the volume of runoff.***
- ***Given the site’s demonstrated susceptibility to surface water flooding and its high groundwater flood risk, reliance on an infiltration-based system is both inappropriate and unsustainable. Preliminary assessments suggest that the permeability of the site is questionable, and without successful BRE 365 soakaway testing, infiltration systems cannot be considered a viable solution. The site's geology and high-water table indicate that it lacks the capacity to manage additional surface water, especially during storm events. The construction of another dwelling will significantly heighten the risk of surface water flooding for both the proposed development and surrounding properties. There are persistent drainage issues in the area affecting several nearby properties. During periods of heavy rainfall, the local sewer infrastructure becomes overwhelmed, leading to backflow into gardens and internal waterlogging and overflowing toilets. In addition, there has been a history of sewage spills in the neighbouring garden (no. 60), highlighting the area's classification within Flood Zones 2. During the recent flooding to the area, raw sewage was flooding the***

garden of no. 60 and Anglian Water were called out on-site and plan to sanitise this garden (again). Given these factors, it is crucial that Anglian Water and the Environment Agency are thoroughly consulted to assess the cumulative impact on the drainage system. The proposed development poses a risk of further exacerbating these issues, necessitating detailed scrutiny and potentially a more robust flood mitigation strategy, contrary to Paragraph 167 of the NPPF and Policy CC3: Flood Risk Management of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

- ***In conclusion, the proposed development would result in an unacceptable loss of outlook, overbearing impact, as well as harmful impacts related to character, design and flooding. The submitted application is contrary to Policies CC3: Flood Risk Management, SP7 Windfall Development and Settlement Envelopes, HQ1: High Quality Development, & HQ8 Backland Development of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan; Paragraphs 135 & 167 of the NPPF and Sections 6.0 & 11.0 of the Central Bedfordshire Council Design Guideline 2023. The addition of a single dwelling does not make a significant contribution to the local housing stock and does not outweigh the negative impacts of this proposal outlined above. No exception test has been provided to justify why this small development cannot be relocated to a more suitable location outside the flood plain.***

7. **CB/24/01061/FULL Planning Appeal**
   The planning appeal for CB/24/01061/FULL (6 Bridge View, Shefford, SG17 5FT) was received and noted by the Committee.

8. **January 2025 Committee Meeting**
   The scheduled Planning and Highways meeting in January 2025 is currently on Wednesday 1st January, a statutory bank holiday.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to move the date of the January Committee meeting to Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 4pm.

Meeting closed 16:45hrs.